

# OM ॐ POINT

INTERNATIONAL CIRCULAR • ISSUE 11 • SUMMER 2013





# OM3POINT

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# BICYCLE TRACKS

SARAH MCNEILL  
ENGLAND

**Another Amartithi comes and goes;  
Another bicycle bell  
Alerts me to You**

Joe di Sabatino

In 1922, Nervous won a lottery held after Lateef presented a new bicycle to Baba. Baba told Nervous to give his old bicycle in exchange for the new one, and then ordered the mandali to break up the old one and throw the pieces into a nearby well, an instruction which was immediately put into action although the men

were at a loss because the old bike was in perfectly good working order. This event took place while Baba and some of the mandali were at Chinchwad. When Baba returned to Poona, Baily told him that during his absence, he, Baily, had accidentally fallen into the well near their hut and had been rescued from drowning by a passing stranger. When asked what time this had occurred, the other mandali realised that the accident and subsequent

rescue had taken place at the exact moment when the bits of Baily's old bicycle were being thrown into the well at Chinchwad. Later, Meher Baba explained, "Instead of allowing Baily to drown, I sank the bicycle in the well. It was simply an exchange of gross mediums." Lord Meher, (Vol.2)

Eruch said, "Don't try to fathom him, don't try to understand his ways, just remember and love him." That's How It Was. But the mind has its tendency to be constantly chewing things over. Feeding it with avataric conundrums, thorny issues and riddles is a useful way to keep it occupied. The idea of an 'exchange of gross mediums' – a process Baba tells us is simple – seemed to offer scope as mind-fodder. In the first place, why throw away a really useful bicycle for such an exchange? Why not a charpoy or a pushcart? It was a simple matter to find and follow other bicycle tracks by searching online through the volumes of Lord Meher. The memoirs of some of Beloved Baba's mandali provided other references.

The story of nineteen year old Merwan Irani, on his bike, wending his way along Malcolm Tank Road in Poona to sit under the neem tree at Char Bawdi with Hazrat Babajan, was a good place to start. It was May 1913, on the unforgettable occasion when the ancient Babajan kissed Merwan on the forehead. Wandering back home in a dazed state, he left his bicycle behind. There's no record of what happened to the abandoned bike, though I recall Mani once telling us how their mother, Shirin, was not pleased that it had been left by the road at Char Bawdi and she sent one of Merwan's brothers out to fetch it back to the house.

In search of something about the history of the bicycle, I learnt that a two-wheeled contraption called a velocipede (because the rider had to use his feet to make it go!) was invented in 1790 by a Frenchman. Fitted with wooden wheels, but with no saddle or handlebars, it was also known as a boneshaker! It was a further one hundred years before the

original design developed into what became known as the 'safety bicycle' complete with sprocket chain, fixed pedals, handlebars and air-filled tyres. And also a saddle to sit on! By the end of the nineteenth century, production lines were working flat out to meet demand as the new means of transport became a must-have item, a passport to the twentieth century! Bicycle shops and bicycle repair shops multiplied across all five continents, and by the time Merwan was a student at

Deccan College in Poona, office workers, policemen, soldiers and millions of other cyclists had taken to the highways and byways of cities, towns and villages around the world.

One of the first to seek out Merwan, after Hazrat Babajan had described him as 'my beloved son who will change the world', was Babu Genuba Ulpale, who had been a regular member of the group that gathered under Babajan's neem tree at Char Bawdi. He in fact owned a bicycle shop in Poona and was to become one of Meher Baba's earliest group of followers. Merwan called him Babu Cyclewalla.

It seems that in the following years, Meher Baba did not normally choose to ride a bike for local journeys, preferring to walk which he did very fast, a characteristic he shared with Babajan. According to Baba (who said that she "used to walk fast, and at 85 she would run fast") when he was a young man, "the mandali had to run or use their bicycles to keep up



with me.” There are, however, still glimpses of Baba on a bicycle in those early years in Poona when, known as Merwan Seth, he worked at his father’s toddy shop. An amusing account tells us how Munshi Rahim, a local government employee who had met Baba only once or twice, became convinced that young Merwan Seth had the ability to read his thoughts. One evening Munshi was thinking, “tomorrow I must eat fish – but how can I buy fish?” and the following morning he saw Merwan Seth bicycling towards him carrying a large fish! “Merwan smiled and, handing the fish to Munshi, pedalled away without a word.” Ramjoo’s Diaries. No photograph exists. What a great picture that would have been! Although, at the time, it was completely unremarkable in a country such as India where everything from tiffin cans to whole families were (and still were until quite recently) perched, dangled or lashed to some part of the bicycle’s frame for transportation.



Exercise was another valued function of this chain-driven, pedal-powered two-wheeler and Baba gives a demonstration in the early days of Manzil e Meem on the occasion when Khodadad K.Irani, known as Asthma (although he ceased to suffer from the ailment after Baba gave him this nickname!) brought his newly acquired bicycle to the ashram. “Baba wanted to exercise and rode it over the recently rolled back playground, thereafter instructing Asthma never to loan the bicycle to anyone else to use.”

After the move to Arangaon and the setting up and development of Meher Baba’s early base at Meherabad, bicycles were in regular use. A Hindu from the village, known as Anna, used to cycle daily to and from Ahmednagar to do all the necessary marketing. Other mandali members would also have had to get on their bikes to run errands for Baba or deliver messages. But most accounts refer to Baba and the mandali walking the distance of 5 or 6 miles into town whenever the need arose. An interesting exception is the account of Baba riding a bicycle to visit the boys at the Prem Ashram in 1929 after Rao Saheb had become depressed about his pupils’ attitude and reported to Baba that 4 boys had “turned into mischievous devils and Ali Akbar is the ringleader”. We are told that on this occasion Baba rode a bicycle “for the first time in several years” and it is clear that the boys were surprised and delighted to see him riding a bike, and apparently “after this incident, there was a decided change for the better in their behaviour.”

Another altogether different kind of story found in Lord Meher,(Vol 8) links a horrendous bicycle ride in 1943 with the partition of India that took place in 1947. At the time of the story, Baba was staying in Lahore which was then still part of India. It happened that a black dog that used to visit the bungalow where the group was staying went mad and bit Margaret.

Baba called for Krishna at 7A.M. when he was resting after doing night duty, and told Krishna to take the rabid animal away. Krishna made a yoke of bamboo and cautiously approached the dog, slipped the yoke around its head to hold it and tied a rope

round its neck.

Baba ordered, “Take the dog twenty miles from here.” Krishna replied, ‘That is not possible, Baba. The dog is rabid – mad.’ Baba was adamant. ‘It is my order,’ he spelled out.

Krishna expressed his inability to transport the dog so far. Baba looked disappointed, and dictated, ‘All right, take him eleven miles. And be certain to count the miles carefully.’ Baba went inside without giving Krishna a chance to protest further.

Krishna got on his bike and, using the rope to pull it and the bamboo to keep it at bay, he led the dog away. It was an arduous task. Using small pebbles he counted off the miles. It took him five hours to bicycle eleven miles. There was a small pond of water, and Krishna took the dog near the water to give it a final drink before letting it go. As soon as the dog touched its mouth to the water, it died. Krishna was peeved. ‘If the dog was to die, why not kill it back in Lahore?’ he wondered. ‘Why go to all this trouble of dragging it eleven miles away?’

Leaving the carcass, Krishna returned to the bungalow. It was almost two in the afternoon. Dr.Nilu was waiting to inform him that Baba wanted to see him immediately. Baba was walking on the veranda. ‘Did you leave the dog?’ he asked.

‘Yes. It died.’

Baba was very happy. ‘You went eleven miles?’ Krishna nodded yes.

Baba smiled, gesturing, ‘I am very happy. You have done a good job. Go and have lunch.’

Krishna stood still. ‘Baba, what is this?’ he asked. ‘Why did you want me to take that dog eleven miles away?’

Baba gave him a kick and twisted his hair. 'Get out!' he motioned. 'Go! Get out of my sight!'

Krishna, however, stood outside the gate. Baba asked him what he wanted.

'What was the reason, Baba? Tell me. First you told me to go twenty miles, then eleven miles. After I took the dog all that way, it died there. If you wanted him dead, I could have killed him here in five minutes. Why did you make me go to all that trouble? What difference did it make where that dog died? What work were you doing?'

Baba called him back and motioned to him to take a stick and draw a line on the ground. Erasing the line with his foot, Baba indicated to draw another line. 'That's correct' he gestured.

Then Baba revealed, 'In the future, India will be divided into two countries – India and Pakistan. This will be the boundary line between the two.' Krishna recalled Baba's words four years later, at the time of partition, when a dispute arose over the exact boundary line, whether it was to be eleven miles or twenty miles from a certain point."

Krishna needed the skills of a trick cyclist to complete that journey, pulling a mad dog on a rope, holding it at bay with a length of bamboo, pushing the pedals and counting out a stone for each mile of the road. The road itself was very likely the Grand Trunk Road that stretches 1500 miles from Kabul in Afghanistan to Dacca in Bengal, passing through Lahore, the scene of awful violence at the time of partition. Certainly the GT Road as it is known would have had milestones along the way which could have helped Krishna to count out his stones. And as for the dog? Who knows? At the time, Noel Coward was famously and inextricably linking mad dogs and Englishmen in the words of a popular song.

And that conjures up an image of the young Dr William Donkin faithfully observing Baba's orders to him in 1945, Lord Meher, (Vol 8) to cycle from Secunderabad (where he was stationed as an Indian British Army Medical Officer) to the bungalow at Jubilee Hills (the other side of Hyderabad) every day to make sure all was well with the ladies at their newly acquired residence. Not that Don, as Baba called him, was mad! Far from it, though anyone observing his progress might have judged otherwise! For

Donkin was unaccustomed to cycling. He was more familiar with a motorbike or as the driver of the Blue Bus or one of Baba's automobiles. But Baba had specified a bicycle. What is more, Baba had given Don two bull terrier puppies, Rajah and Rani, and he told Don to bring them with him each day to the bungalow, a distance of about ten miles, carrying them in the bicycle basket. Of course the dogs jumped out from time to time as one might expect and Don had to run around, much to the amusement of any onlookers, trying to catch the dogs and get them back into the basket before remounting his bike and resuming his journey. In the heat of Hyderabad it made for an arduous journey each day necessitating a shower and a change of shirt on arrival before going to see Baba.

One last story I wanted to include was the story Eruch told about being sent on what he firmly believed was a wild goose chase one day when he was tired out and starting to get fed up with the way, as soon as he'd finished all the work he had to do, Baba would suddenly come up with something else that had to be done. This story was finally found for me in Tales From The New Life. Eruch's bicycle story goes as follows:



I still remember an incident from about that period when I decided it was useless to return from an errand early. No sooner would I return to Baba than there was always something else to do, such as cycling another ten or fifteen miles more after a tiring day. On the day in question I still remember that I was very tired. Of course that was a blow to my ego, because I felt that as I had good health I could do many things for Baba, that I could survive all hardships. But my body couldn't withstand any more and I thought, it's useless to finish the task appointed and return early. No sooner will I have done this than there will be another task for me.

I completed going round the market and buying things for the group, and when I returned I was very fatigued. Then somebody came and told Baba, 'At a distance of about fifteen miles there is a temple where it is said a tiger comes and sweeps the floor with his tail in reverence to the deity there. The tiger is reputed to be a mast who changes his form.'

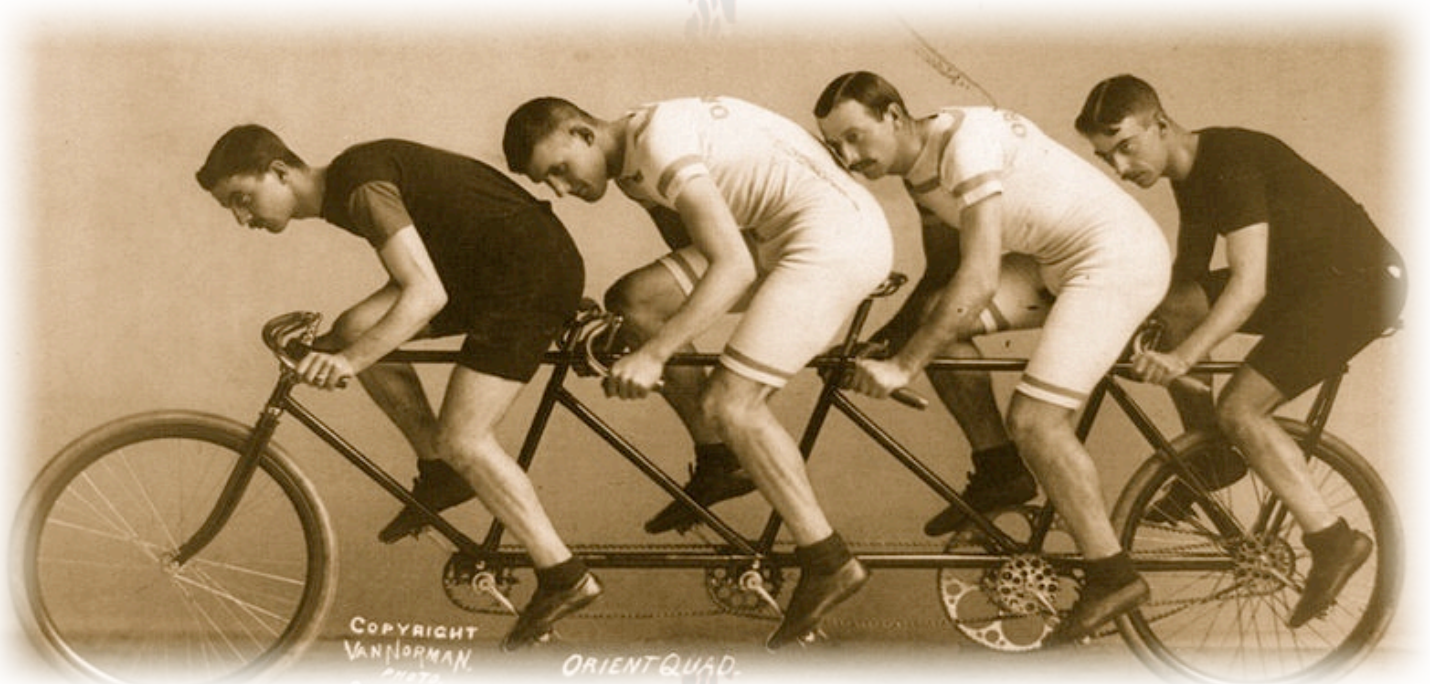
The fellow who told this tale was Elcha, Baba's court jester as we called him. He's from the North of India. He used to tell these yarns to make Baba laugh, but Baba took this yarn seriously for my sake, so that Eruch should have some occupation, so that Eruch should no longer boast of his physical endurance but have the chance to forget himself completely and have no thought of himself.

Baba looked at me and said, 'Why don't you go and find out about this?' I shuddered when Baba looked at me – to cycle fifteen miles on that bad road, up onto the hill and then return, and already it was late afternoon. I said, 'Baba, you know Elcha's jokes. He is here. Shall I ask him more about this?' He said, 'Yes, I know Elcha's humour. But there are many people who believe this story in the town. Every little child knows it.'

Of course, I went. To carry out Baba's every command – one has to do that. I had chosen the path of freedom in coming to Baba. I wanted to be free to try to obey him, and so I was absolutely free in this bondage. In such a case I exercise my freedom, and in doing so I must exercise it fully, so of course I obeyed his command and went.

Naturally the story was all a fake. There was no such thing as a man turned into a tiger. I knew the results before I left so naturally my mind was in revolt all the while I was cycling there. After confirming that there was nothing to the story, I thought, of what use is it for me to return now? Even if I return late in the evening Baba will send me out on another errand. So I said to myself, yes, I agree with the prompting of my mind. Eruch, it's really true, even if you go back now and report to him, there will be some other work waiting, so the best thing for you to do is relax and give some real rest to your body.

There were a lot of culverts on the road, and I selected one parapet that was a bit broader than the others. I said, this is a nice place where I can have a good nap. But I was concerned about the cycle lest somebody steal it. I was on a jungle track used by the local inhabitants who occasionally went out to chop wood, and one couldn't be sure of these people.



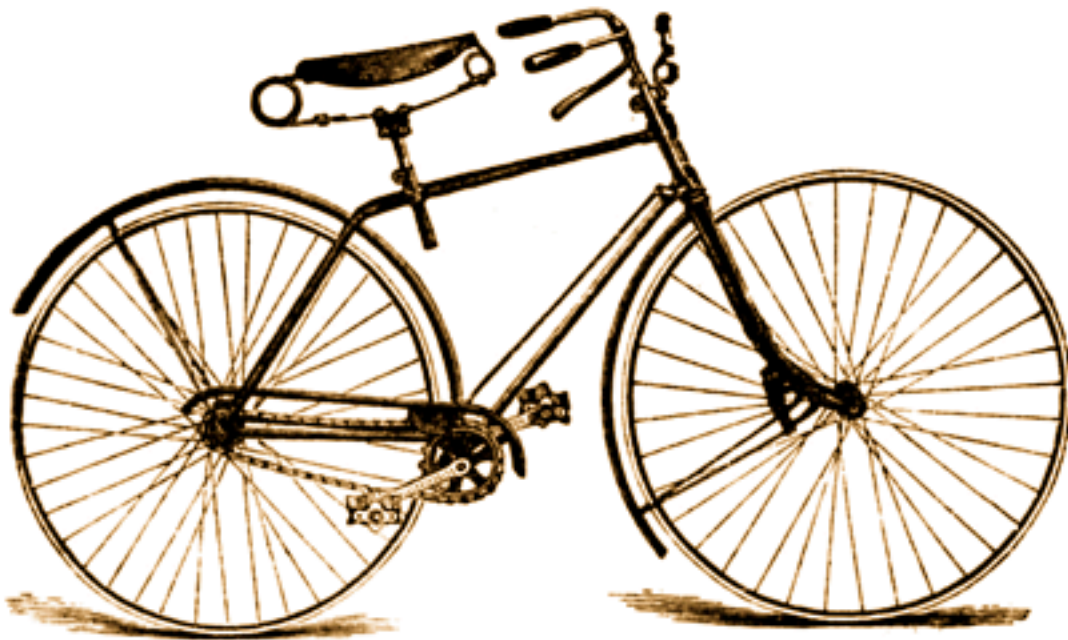
Early multirider bicycle team, 1890's

I thought of a plan. I took my handkerchief and tied it round the spokes and to my wrist and then went to sleep. After a couple of hours I woke up. It was very late, so I returned and Baba was waiting for me. I knew he would ask me what had happened, why I had not turned up, because usually I am very punctual. I never lost a single minute. That was the first such incident in my life.

When I returned there was the message for me that Baba wanted me to go to him immediately. I went and Baba asked me, 'Well, what's the result of your search?' I said, 'It's all fake and bunkum.' I was a bit upset, you see, irritated. 'There's no truth whatsoever in all that Elcha said, and I knew that.' Baba said, 'But why are you late? You had to go out most probably in search of people who could tell you?' I said, 'I didn't have to go out anywhere because the local people informed me it is all just a story...' 'Well then, why are you late?' I kept quiet. Again he insisted on an answer, and then I had to report to him what I had done. When I had given him the story, he pinched my ear lobe and said, 'Eruch, you should never do this again.' That's all.

And that's how it was! One is left where one started, with little if any understanding of why or how a bicycle weighed in on a par with a human life in the balance of 'gross mediums'. The 'constellar arrangement of cogs and wheels designed to translate physical energy into forward motion' that we call a bicycle could possibly be seen as a metaphor, a vehicle for meaning as well as a carrier of people. Wheels within wheels you might say. For once the mind is at a loss! You can't fathom Him. Just love Him.

**"COLUMBIAS"**  
HIGHEST · GRADE · ONLY.



# Sadguru Narayan Maharaj IN Kedgaon

by Karl Moeller Tucson AZ

Meher

Baba's framed picture over a doorway beamed down on us, and I felt comfortable and

welcomed the moment we entered the ashram registration office in Kedgaon. An elderly Indian man in white approached us. Bif Soper asked if he was a trustee. He said yes, his name was Shanti, Narayan Maharaj's nephew. When Bif explained we had come from Meherabad, Shanti indicated he was well aware of the close relationship between Baba and Narayan. We had come on a very auspicious day, he told us, the last day of four months' round the clock prayers, or 'jap', at Narayan's tomb - the biggest festival day of the year in Kedgaon. On this Thursday in late November, we had come simply in hopes of seeing Narayan's underground meditation chamber.

Despite his busy day, Shanti Saheb took us under his wing. We entered the nearly deserted temple grounds across the street. An overtaxed public address system bellowed loud bhajans or artis from the far end of the village square. This temple, built by Narayan in 1913, was where he prayed to the famous statue of Lord Dattatrey, which would come to life before him, and they would converse together.

We circled the temple and walked through the village square toward Narayan's palace. It was a warm, sunny day, cool in the shade. Rangoli, large colorful devotional chalk drawings, decorated the ground in front of the entrance. We shed our shoes and entered the palace's great hall. It was jammed with pilgrims and noise. Shanti told us



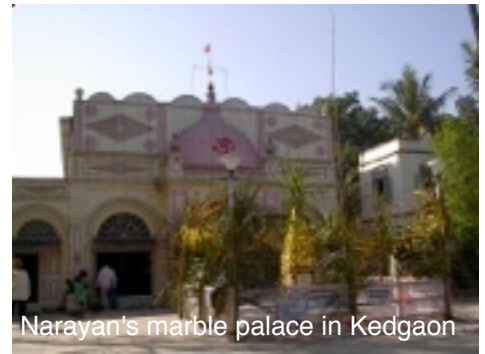
that Narayan's famous silver throne used to be where Narayan's silver tomb now stands. Musicians played on a platform at one end of the crowded room. Women sat on the floor on one side and men on the other, as a circulating line of devotees prostrated themselves one by one before a small statue of Narayan. Later I learned that Narayan stood only four feet, six inches, so the statue was actually life-sized. People were clearly curious about us, the only Westerners in town, yet I felt very much a part of this happy, completely Indian scene, honoring Narayan.

Above the musical volume, Shanti said that Narayan's silver throne was available to be seen, more good luck, since it is on display only four days a year. An excited crowd gathered around the throne, which was in a corner to the right of Narayan's silver tomb. Bif was videotaping everything, with permission, and had found another elderly English speaking trustee to interview. We sat and listened to the artis, many of which ended with a gratifyingly familiar 'Sadguru Narayan Maharaj, ki jai!!' Some of the worshippers laid a small CD or DVD at the feet of Narayan's statue. To my surprise, our party was invited to come to the stage, where Narayan's chief disciple gave each of us a copy of the VCD, which later proved to have interviews (in Marathi) and various artis and bhajans in praise of Narayan.

While I was seated on the marble palace floor, trying to ignore my protesting ankles, a boy walked up to me, perhaps six to eight years old. With the amplifiers turned so high, I couldn't hear a word he said. I shook my head, and he said something again, louder. I still couldn't pick it up. After three or four more times I said, forcefully, 'Marathi nieh'. At that instant the music paused, and he fairly yelled in my face, 'I'm not speaking Marathi, I'm speaking English!' Taken aback, I lamely said, 'And very



good English it is, too!" He'd merely wanted to know my name and where I was from. I told him, and he nodded in thanks and trotted off. Ten minutes later he returned and we played the I-can't-hear-you game until I got it: he was asking, did I know where we were. I replied, "Narayan's palace in Kedgaon". He smiled triumphantly and announced, "No,



Narayan's marble palace in Kedgaon



Narayan's statue in the palace

we're in Bed!" I later realized he was saying "Bet". According to the Lord Meher chapter on Narayan Maharaj, the end of the village where Narayan's palace sits is indeed known as Kedgaon Bet.

Soon the throng rose and filed out, a happy procession of several hundred, headed toward the outskirts of the village. Another trustee took us



Narayan's silver throne

behind Narayan's tomb into the rooms where Narayan used to take coffee. He told us a story of how Narayan would take the train which used the rail line passing through lower Meherabad, and on any number of occasions the train unaccountably stopped until Baba came out and gave his namaskars to Narayan and his party.. only then could the engineers get the train moving again. He also told a story about how, in the early days of the Depression, Narayan solicited quite a large loan from a businessman. By this time Narayan's spiritual status was well known, and I imagine the businessman considered a spiritual master would certainly be a safe choice to grant a loan. However, after some time passed, Narayan declined to repay the loan; the businessman was forced to take it to court. I didn't hear



whether he was successful in recovering the money. Some discussion ensued, along with the opinion that Narayan, having lived both as a sanyasin and as a rich man, may have had a spiritual role in the worldwide financial depression of the 1920s – 30s.

Behind the palace building we saw the bath Narayan may have used before entering his underground meditation chamber. Some in the group had hoped that we could bathe and enter this chamber, but the building over the entrance was being painted inside and out. We could see the tunnel and steps leading down into it, a very small space indeed. Being both claustrophobic and large, I was secretly relieved that we were not allowed access.

We then trooped up the back stairs to the second story to see Narayan's bedchamber (with the famous tiger skin) and another reception hall. An elderly devotee, Narayan's sister-in-law, sang a beautiful clear arti, one of Narayan's favorites. As she sang, I wandered the adjacent reception hall and noted many articles used by Narayan, as well as picture histories on each wall. Later, alone in the bedchamber, I petted the tiger's head and took a photo. I had a feeling of reverence and peace, similar to being in Baba's room in Meherazad, or in his house in Myrtle Beach.

By now the procession was moving from house to house in the village. Householders stood at their front doors with bags of sweets, which they pitched into the throng by the handful. Boys kept blowing off both small firecrackers and amazingly loud bombs.. Divali revisited. I decided to rest my ears from the artis and retired to the shade near the ashram registration office. Many of the passing festival-goers eyed me curiously, and those bolder or with better English took the opportunity to speak with me. Young boys dared each other to touch my jeans and run away. After this happened twice, I leaned down and said "Namaskar" clearly to these youngsters. They were delighted, and returned my greeting with folded hands, a namaskar, and a bow.

Adults introduced themselves, wanting to know my name, where I was from, and how I came to be there on this day. I was wearing a Baba button and standing near our car with 'meherbaba' in big letters across the back window. Some

of them had heard of the link between Narayan and Meher Baba, and all seemed to relax when I described Narayan as a Perfect Master. A young woman with excellent English, still in high school, spoke knowledgeably about Baba. One man gestured toward a small crowd of women and children, indicating his wife and sisters were there, and introduced me to his two brothers-in-law. He asked what I felt was the main difference in our cultures. I replied, "Family connections." Not too inspired, given the number of his family I'd just met, but once again Baba had given me just the right thing to say. My new acquaintance identified himself as an officer in the New Delhi police force, said his family had been with Narayan for generations, and invited me to sit with his family at the about-to-occur mass luncheon/prasad. I gently declined, explaining I was waiting for my friends. I can't emphasize enough how deeply touched I was by the good-will, courtesy and acceptance I received from these devotees.

When we trooped into the ashram courtyard to wash our hands for lunch, we found hundreds already there, men and women sitting in separate lines. Our companion Ann was seated next to the friendly schoolgirl with perfect English; at the time I took this happy coincidence as further sign that Narayan, or Baba, was gently guiding our day.

We sat with the men against a back wall, waiting. Some of Narayan's men began to sing, ending every time with the achingly familiar 'ki jai!'. Teenage boys sitting across from me, watched us curiously. I caught one's eye and raised one eyebrow menacingly until he laughed. Shanti came to see how we were doing, and Bif immediately stood and began interviewing him again on-camera. The complete story of our day, pictures and interviews, remains locked in Bif's videotapes. Had I unlimited funds, I would set up a permanent video editing and mastering facility



to work with the mass of video and audio material accumulated over the years by Bif Soper and Bob Fredericks.

The meal resembled those I had seen in films of Baba's mass darshans. Men came around with buckets of rice, delicious daals and vegetarian curries, (we avoided the raw chutneys), all served on pressed leaf plates. We took care to eat only with our right hands. I found I was adept at getting most of it in my mouth, aided with a little flick from my thumb. At the end of the meal I took my greasy hand toward the crowd around the water sinks, but my policeman friend took me aside and poured some of his drinking water over my hand, as a final blessing.

On the ride back to Meherabad I noted that there were some discrepancies between what we had been told and what was written in Bif's copy of Lord Meher: that Narayan's silver throne was solid silver, over 1000 kilos in weight, while the book says it is only silver plated; it says Narayan was cremated, his ashes split between two sites, but Shanti Saheb had told me clearly that Narayan's body was in his silver tomb in the Palace.

In retrospect, this was a smooth, joy-filled, utterly surprising festival day. I had the impression, from his followers, that Narayan Maharaj was a very light-hearted master. Though we were unexpected guests on a major festival day, we were treated with unfailing courtesy and given a warm welcome, a comprehensive tour, and a delicious meal. I felt the entire expedition had been arranged by Meher Baba and Narayan Maharaj as a gift of love to our party.



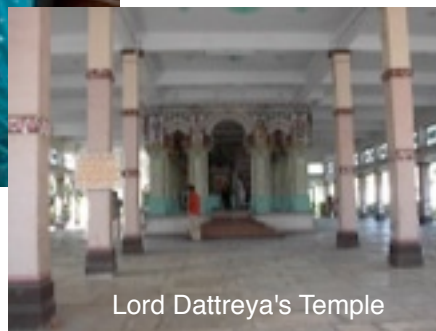
The Intrepid Travelers



Narayan's sister-in law sings his favorite arti



Rangoli (chalk art) before Narayan's palace



Lord Dattreya's Temple



Procession through the village. Householders throw handfuls of sweets.



Sadguru Narayan Maharaj in the early 1940's



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Narayan as a young yogi. Statue of Lord Dattatreya in the temple in Kedgaon. Behind the scenes in Narayan's palace with one of the Trustees. Narayan in his early forties. On the men's side, awaiting luncheon. Devotees mob Narayan's silver throne, rarely shown in public.

# Seven States Of Understanding by Meher Baba



**Tibetan Mastiff**

1. Instinct
2. Intellect
3. Inspiration
4. Intuition
5. Insight
6. Illumination
7. Realization

Instinct governs the animal world; intellect, humans; inspiration for those humans whose feelings are developed – like poets and artists. Intuition is for those advanced souls who have conscious visions and understanding true to the point. What you understand by intuition is always true. What you understand by intellect is sometimes true and sometimes not.

Souls on the fourth and fifth planes have insight; their understanding is direct, without thinking with the mind. Illumination means seeing God as He is. The understanding is divine. Realization is understanding oneself as God. During the process of evolution of forms and consciousness, there are seven turns until the human form develops. Now, every turn has a direct connection with God. We will not now mention the other six turnings; for instance, in the vegetable kingdom, tulsi (the holy basil plant) is on the turning. In the animal kingdom, a dog is on the turning, as it has intuition and also partial insight, without being able to use it consciously.

Saints of the fifth and sixth planes have insight, and they use it. But the dog cannot use it. The dog only sees things that ordinary human beings cannot. The dog's company purifies thoughts and atmosphere. That is why Zoroastrians have the custom of bringing a dog to see the corpse when someone is dead before disposal of the body; the dog purifies the sanskaras.

Dogs play an important part when used consciously by the Master. In my seclusion of about ten days, I wanted a dog for some work of my own – I won't tell you what. I could not use Chum, nor any of the other pets. The dog I wanted had to be fresh, new, innocent and young. So, before seclusion, it all came about that Khorshed happened to mention an Alsatian puppy, and eventually we got Warrior. I said, "He is my dog." I did not say so about Jingo and Bingo or the other pets. Warrior, you all understood, was Baba's dog! Warrior was not actually a dog, but was temporarily brought down from the spirit world to do this work. I needed a dog for that kind of work. I won't go too deeply into the matter.

So Warrior came, and I kept on telling Elizabeth that he was to be near me. But I also knew that it would be

difficult, as things would crop up that would create obstacles. Therefore, for the first few days, Warrior suffered from worms, germs, et cetera. Eventually, I had him for the time I wanted him. I knew he would die, just as I know that before July 1st, 1941, Chum too will die. So after I worked with him, I fed him with my own hands and gave him water to drink. When my work was over, I sent him back. Soon after, he got ill, and I discussed with 'Soltoon's sister' (meaning Baidul, since no man's name would be mentioned in front of the women) where to bury him when he died. We finally selected that spot. When Warrior got very ill, I saw that if he died within three days, he would again have to take another birth, which would not have been safe for him. I saw to it that he did not pass away. So, when in those three days he did not die, I was happy. Now, no more birth for him!

When Masters touch the dead bodies of animals, the animals get human forms in their next lives. Those animals who are in contact with Masters get forms of spiritual souls in the next birth. But, for Warrior, no more birth!

Had he died within three days, it would have been different. I remember how he came to my gaadi the last time I saw him. I patted him. I knew he would die. He played a part in my work which none of you can ever grasp. He shared my work and now he is free.

Even Chum will not be so lucky. He will die before July 1941, and will be buried next to Warrior. But he will come back as a yogi. Kippy will also be a yogi in her next birth. I will not go deeply into details, because it would not make you understand anything more clearly. But I have given you some idea of my working.

Warrior, who kept me company in seclusion, died. I am happy. He died in time and not before. Even I could not have stopped that. The work was of such a kind that had I stopped it, the whole thing would have been in a mess! He was a real warrior! He played an actual part in my work. How God works! He just takes a spirit from the spirit world, gives it form, works with it, and when it is over, takes it away! Ram's Hanuman, Baba's Warrior!

Elizabeth, you are not God-Realized. You naturally feel sad about Warrior's death, but knowing what I explained to you, you should be happy.

From Lord Meher, pp. 2618-2619.

# World Premiere of *The Escape Artist*

## The 2013 Birthday Play at Meherabad Music and Arts Center

Review by Kathy Hill, Meherabad

Have you ever been so moved by a piece of music that you find tears rolling down your face? If not, perhaps you have never had the pleasure of listening to Robert Een sing. His voice has enormous power and resonance, and a range of over three octaves (I guess). I first heard him a few years ago, at a concert at Meherabode in Los Angeles, and then in a concert at CalArts as part of the World Festival of Sacred Music. Every time he opens his mouth, the sounds go straight into my heart without passing through my mind. This is a very rare experience for someone like me who lacks any sort of “ear” or musical talent. You can find more about him on the web, and I hope you will; however, it’s not the Tibetan throat-singing or the virtuosic cello-playing that comes across as his remarkable talent, keep in mind, it is his unique and powerful tendency to capture your heart.

Thus it was with much delight that I learned it was Robert and his multitalented wife Karin Levitas who would be the creators of this year’s Birthday Play here in Meherabad. Then I discovered that the concert at CalArts which had so enthralled me in Los Angeles was the basis for this dramatic performance, and that it would include the music that I had found so moving.

The Birthday Play is an unusual theatrical adventure, in that traditionally the rehearsals and other preparations do not commence until Amartithi concludes. Think about that! Little more than three weeks to mount a full-scale production, including casting and rehearsing the actors, designing and building the sets, planning and making all the costumes, working out the endless details of sound and lighting, plus the multitudinous enhancements of slides, films and special effects. Now add into the equation that many of the candidates for these roles may not be extending their pilgrimages for the whole month of February!

It’s a good thing Meherabad draws so much talent. This year the cast members hailed from fifteen different countries. And the ultimate outcome, thank you Baba, of all this effort? An unforgettable experience for the audience, with many moved to tears as I was by the story and its artful telling, even if they struggled to understand English.

It’s a good story, told through song and action and dynamic visual effects including two short films. It had humor and pathos and brilliant singing that would put angels to shame. Even the soldiers engaged in battle coordinated their lathi strikes as if in a ballet. And behind it all was that music, the compositions of Robert Een, that engage the heart so fully that the mind becomes a little bit unbalanced and you are drawn into the tale as if you are on stage yourself.

*The Escape Artist* was created and directed by Robert Een and Karin Levitas. Music was composed by Robert Een and the script was written by Karin Levitas. It was produced by Alan Wagner and the Art Director was Nadia Wolinska. Choreographer was Rena Milgramova.

*The Escape Artist* depicts a spiritual quest. A young man full of promise makes the mistake of his lifetime. He runs for his life, encountering many teachers— each of whom gives him a push on his path until he finally finds his true teacher.

This year the lead role, the Seeker, went to a talented local young man, Meherprakash Tiwari. I only hope that in the years to come when he enjoys the acclaim of Bollywood or Hollywood or both, he will remember who was on his team way back when. He has enormous skill and grace as an actor and his scenes were memorable for his gravitas and humor. This could not have been an easy combination to portray.

The large supporting cast acquitted themselves beautifully from curtain rise to final bows, and the scenery, staging and dancing left nothing to be desired. From manifesting a twelve-foot-tall steamship, to a Garden of Paradise in full bloom, the backstage crew performed miracles (and even a magic trick!). Please take a look at the Cast and Crew list to see who all participated.

I must take one more stab at talking about the music, though. This show is not exactly an opera or a musical; the story was advanced as much by the spoken word as by the seventeen original lyrics and instrumentals that emanated from the orchestra pit. The amazing, heartfelt music, however, is what made the entire production hang together and *glow*. Get your hands on the DVD as soon as it is available!

## Where There Is Love

Where there is love, there is no separation but unity,  
Where there is love, there is no anger and jealousy.

Where there is love, there is no race and competition,  
Where there is love, there is no better and worse.

Where there is love, there is no crying but laughter,  
Where there is love, there is no mountain you could not climb.

Where there is love, the Sun will move away and let you shine,  
Where there is love, there is no hatred; there is no war.

Where there is love, there is the calmness and the peace we all so want,  
Where there is love, we all are children and will play day after day.

Where there is love, there is the light to light the way,  
Where there is love, there is the kindness to keep us warm.

Where there is love, there is no child to leave behind,  
Where there is love, there is no orphan; we all will have a dad.

Where there is love, there is the truth, to see us through,  
Where there is love, there are no tears but the tears of joy.

Where there is love, I only cry, I moan and cry,  
Where there is love, I moan and mourn the separation.

Where there is love, I am no more I am no more...♥♥♥

Where there is love, there is just love, the love of that divine! ((♥))

Where there is love, there is just love of my beloved and my 'GOD'.

Simin Mohajerani  
25 Oct 2011



## When The Clouds Parted

When the clouds parted  
Baba knew  
the moment  
Of clarity  
Returning to joy  
And light  
Became part of  
His gift  
Thanks Baba for being  
There again  
With love in  
Abundance

Anne Weichberger

# Intuition

I sit at the Altar of the MASTER within

I wait patiently letting the petals of the Lotus  
unfold slowly.

Then surely the dew of intuitive wisdom drops  
into my open heart

As the drops of God lovingly accumulate,  
inner peace and confidence exude.

There is an inner knowing of the actions I can  
now take under sublime divine guidance.

In gratitude and faith I AM.

Sara Sanders



## FORGETMENOTS

Waking up  
an angel perched in tree shape  
branched and veined wings  
greet my new day again.

A great hope springs from deeper latent dreams  
pushing through and through  
arriving somehow to cover itself in silence.  
Forgetmenots drape form after form  
memory ploughing and turning a deeper and deepest  
colouring light and dancing sound  
taking and giving pleasure from movements in wind time turning

David Lee  
London  
2013

## A few recent Gnostic Verses

### 1. Music Theory

If music is only obsolete in moksha  
it demonstrates what utility in life?

perhaps it's employed to overcome inertia  
& regulate all the threads of joy & strife

### 2. Who Am I?

If you utter my name I vanish  
if you mention me not I'm there  
I'm Silencio if you're Spanish  
(or Italianized) in air  
I dangle with mystery's mist  
of all that is said I'm the gist!

### 3. Canvassing the Silence

When the pollster meets with silence  
and the poll at length collapses  
can you hear the distant violins?  
can you jump the short synapses?

When the pollster meets with stillness  
and the poll is finally canceled  
can you feel the silence fill this  
open space with no mark penciled?

When the pollster hears no answer  
and the poll's at last unraveled  
do you glimpse the cosmic dancer  
and discern how far he's travelled?

David Raphael Israel

# The Affirmation

...to put it bluntly, Almighty God is so full of Himself that he wants every atom of the infinite megazillions of His existence to express fully-consciously how great He is. He wants almighty, all-encompassing applause! And it is said that in order to achieve this, He made the ultimate outcome of the evolutionary mechanism of His creation the formation of consciousness in human beings, and this expressly for the purpose of knowing and affirming God as the One Reality; celebrating eternal unity with the indivisible, universal soul; and at the same time acknowledging the truth of the infinite as infinite. To fulfil these ends, the conscious human being is endowed with three vehicles of expression – mental, emotional and physical, each designed respectively for the generation and expression of thoughts, feelings and actions.

On reflection, it seems reasonable to suppose that the first thoughts generated and expressed in the mentality of a newborn human being could be an individualised version of “How great I am!” and “I want to hear the applause!” Also that the first emotional impulse could be a similarly individualised expression manifesting as an infantile outburst. And, also similarly, quite logical that the first individualised actions of the vehicle of the physical body of the newborn might express such desires and energy by producing varying levels of noise. It could also be argued that, at this early point, ego-mind (in miniature so to speak) comes to life, and duality (confrontation with anything, any idea or any person impudent or outrageous enough to dissent or stand in the way of the affirmation of greatness) becomes the game. A dream game which then grows and develops through childhood and adulthood and takes up all the energy of yet another dreamed lifetime.

“The megazillions of atoms of my conscious existence in the creation I have created are not praising me!!” harrumphs the Almighty. “They are creating applause for themselves and for everything they do! Very loudly!! But I have a plan!”

Unimaginable aeons pass, and in that time Almighty God bestows on His creation the fullest, most passionate expression of His infinite love in the shape and form of Himself as the divine service engineer who comes to live and work among human beings; one who is recognised by different groups at different times and given holy names such as Messiah, Rasool and Avatar. Everywhere he works, the divine service engineer adjusts, tunes and re-sets the heart/mind/body alignments of millions of human souls, improving psychic energy conservation and efficiency, tweaking the valency and affinities of high-speed mentation processes and pouring the oil of divine love into the workings of consciousness.

Although each group at each particular period in time claims their own service engineer to be unique and exclusive to them, the essential objectives and effectiveness of his work are of course the same everywhere: an awakening from dreams; an enhanced focus on the reality of infinite Truth; a reverent acknowledgement of the One as that-which-is in all life on earth and throughout the universe; plus a renewed, whole-hearted devotion. Inevitably and indubitably, over thousands of years, these objectives and effects begin to irradiate the individualised consciousness of vast numbers of souls, causing transformations in the internal workings of their hearts, minds and bodies.

Soon, very soon, after only a few more aeons, a moment of critical mass is reached as the conscious, energised focus on the One of all thusly irradiated individual beings achieves maximum potential, causing a concentrated force which flashes into instant simultaneous recognition, exploding the dreams and imploding across all the planes of being and throughout all the realms of the universe with an affirmation of Mahapralayan intensity and magnitude, illuminated by cosmic incandescence and flares and fireworks and glory and applause! And the Lord God in His firmament, being almightily pleased with this tumultuous affirmation and by the totality of perfected consciousness of the infinite as infinite, orchestrates a crescendo of splendour with choruses of glorious hallelujahs as His own ultimate expression of one hundred per cent satisfaction.

Sarah McNeill  
England



## Remembrance

When I'm here with You  
I forget the world  
and only remember Love.

This is what my whole existence  
has sprung up  
to experience on a full time basis.  
a time transcendent basis,  
to be more exact.

Perhaps the reason I don't readily find you  
without  
is because you can only be found within,  
save within a few rare blossomed souls  
on the divine path.

Save those who have surrendered  
their all at your feet.

Save those whose hearts  
have become your abode.

But for me  
the surest way  
to remain in contact with you  
is to elongate the times  
I am alone with You,

Oblivious to the world  
of cheeseburgers, beer,  
and scantily clad girls  
to bring in the sales.

Oblivious to the fast lane  
of judgment and fault-finding,  
the slippery slope of  
hatred and greed,  
the death chamber of  
lust and anger.

Oh sweet wine of love  
course through my weary veins  
and keep the Remembrance  
alive in my heart.

Alone is not bad,  
Alone is with God.

3.25.13

## Little Hearts

Sometimes I wonder  
If you really love me  
And then you remind me  
Not by your booming voice in the sky  
Not by miracles of healing  
or answered prayers  
Not by an over flowing feeling of love  
in my heart  
No, not by those.  
But by the little hearts you place  
On my path...

I see hearts  
everywhere  
all the time  
as if they were  
in pursuit.

They pop up  
in the random patterns  
of food  
They appear on walls  
among the leaves  
in the sky – in the clouds  
in pictures  
where no one else seems to notice  
but me.

Stones of heart  
find their way on my path  
no matter where I walk  
I even find them  
In the natural designs in the tiles  
in my house  
as if placed there  
by an all-knowing hand  
who knew I would one day  
discover them.

Coincidence?  
Or a frequent reminder  
that it is indeed you  
who is in pursuit.

Panera  
4.12.13

## Longing For Perfection

We long for perfection  
in our bodies  
in our worlds  
in our friendships  
in our loves  
in our art, music, and poetry  
in our longing.

We shun hatred and disharmony.  
We shy away  
from crude and fossilized patterns of  
thought.  
It breaks our hearts  
to set foot in murky waters  
while we seek  
the sparkling streams of Eden  
and the memory  
of the once-inhaled-scent of paradise  
tantalizes our deadened senses  
taunting us to seek deeper and deeper  
within our lost selves  
to resurrect the vanished Paradise.

3.23.13

All poems by  
Fereshteh Azad



## This Fountain of Oneness

There is only one dying--  
to leave off what I want.

How to live then?

Give Me everything, He says,  
and I will give you Nothing.

--Irma Sheppard

Hafiz says, 'Don't try for Realization because even to try for it is sheer madness. Have only one madness—to become the dust at the feet of the Perfect Master.' To become dust means to completely surrender your heart and mind, so that you are, as it were, already dead. There is no shanti (peace of mind) on this Path. If you want peace of mind then you can get it elsewhere, and in other ways. You can go for nice long walks or listen to soothing music or take sedatives or go to Sants or Sadhus. But here is not the place to come for it; for if you come to Me, remember that the spiritual Path is full of hardships and sufferings; while at other places you can get peace of mind for they know nothing about the Path. Hafiz says that he who does not surrender at the feet of a Perfect Master cannot get God. There is thus only one remedy—hold fast to the Perfect Master's daaman even if you feel that He is going to drop you into a ditch. Hafiz says, 'Leave all prayer to God, pray only to the Perfect Master. Hold fast to His daaman and you will realize God!'"

~Meher Baba



OmPoint COVER

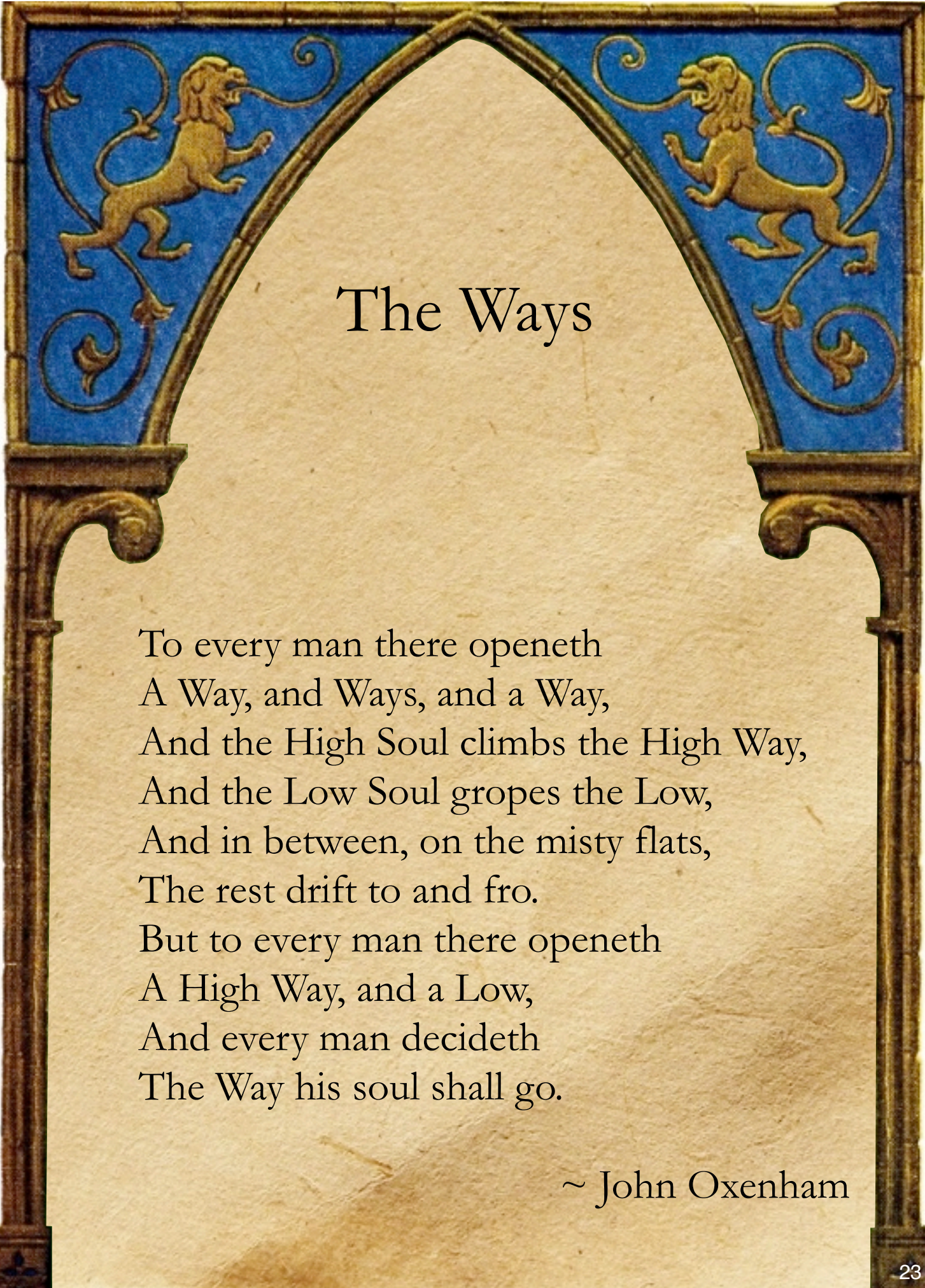
Wodin Art

THE BOAT HOUSE

transparent watercolor on paper

2004 cat. # c-2004-9-wc

21"x28" \$5,880



## The Ways

To every man there openeth  
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,  
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,  
And the Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And in between, on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro.  
But to every man there openeth  
A High Way, and a Low,  
And every man decideth  
The Way his soul shall go.

~ John Oxenham

## **The Passing of Konrad Kaserer by Laurent Weichberger ~ May 2013**

My friend and spiritual companion on the path, Konrad Kaserer passed away last week. Before I share his obituary, I will share a few words about this remarkable man. We used to walk together in the morning, after I dropped my daughter Aspen off at school. He would bring his dog, and we would talk about God and the world, as we walked at Buffalo Mesa, or Fox Glenn Park. He was a keen listener, he loved to share what he was inspired by, and his spiritual experience, and he was above all -- a real lover of God.

Once in 2009, I asked him if he would please speak at an event in Flagstaff as part of an interfaith panel I had assembled for Beads on One String (about our book, Celebrating Divine Presence)[1]. I asked if he would represent Christianity, and he agreed immediately. I remember Aspen, at 14, remarking afterward that Konrad was cool. What higher compliment can a reverend get in this world?

Konrad, you were God-cool, and I looked up to you for your wisdom, and experience, and strength... for sharing with me as a real man amongst men. I went to visit your Unity church -- to experience one of your services, but I was told you had since resigned from that position. Konrad, you got to go home, so fortunate -- a life well lived. I take my hat off to you, brother.

\* \* \*

Rev. Konrad Kaserer died Thursday, May 16, 2013 after complications from a heart attack. He was born as a twin on September 4, 1953 in a small village in the Italian Alps. He received a master's degree in theology at the Catholic Missionary Institute London and served as a missionary priest in the African rainforest in the former country of Zaire. There he met a Peace Corp volunteer, Dee Burgman, whom he married. After moving to Flagstaff, he earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from Northern Arizona University. During his time in Flagstaff, he worked in a

community-based mental health organization and opened his own practice, Summit Counseling Services. He served as Spiritual Leader for Unity of Flagstaff for ten years. Konrad is survived by his two sons, Sam and Jake, his mother and eight brothers and sisters who reside in Holland, Austria, and Italy.

Konrad's written mission statement for his life reads: "To honor my life and priestly vocation; to honor the Divine by living the divine life I came here to live; to express love, happiness, abundance, joy, peace, compassion; to be in communion with my beloved; to travel and experience the world as the beautiful garden that it is. I want others to be at least as successful as I am."

Notes:

1. See

<http://tinyurl.com/myznzfv>



## Morning Meditation

The soul weighs the same  
whether baby or old person  
So let your full weight  
fall upon Me  
Collapse into My arms  
and I will catch, hold, and  
carry you with ease  
as I always have  
Your soul rides in  
a sailboat, not a tugboat  
Release your troubles  
into the water like scattered ash  
Become weightless again  
Listen My love,  
the soul weighs less than a pea  
and is made of breath  
touched with Love's fine caress  
Nothing heavy should hold it down  
All you need is  
a thimble full of Me  
to be made of Light

Marla Faith

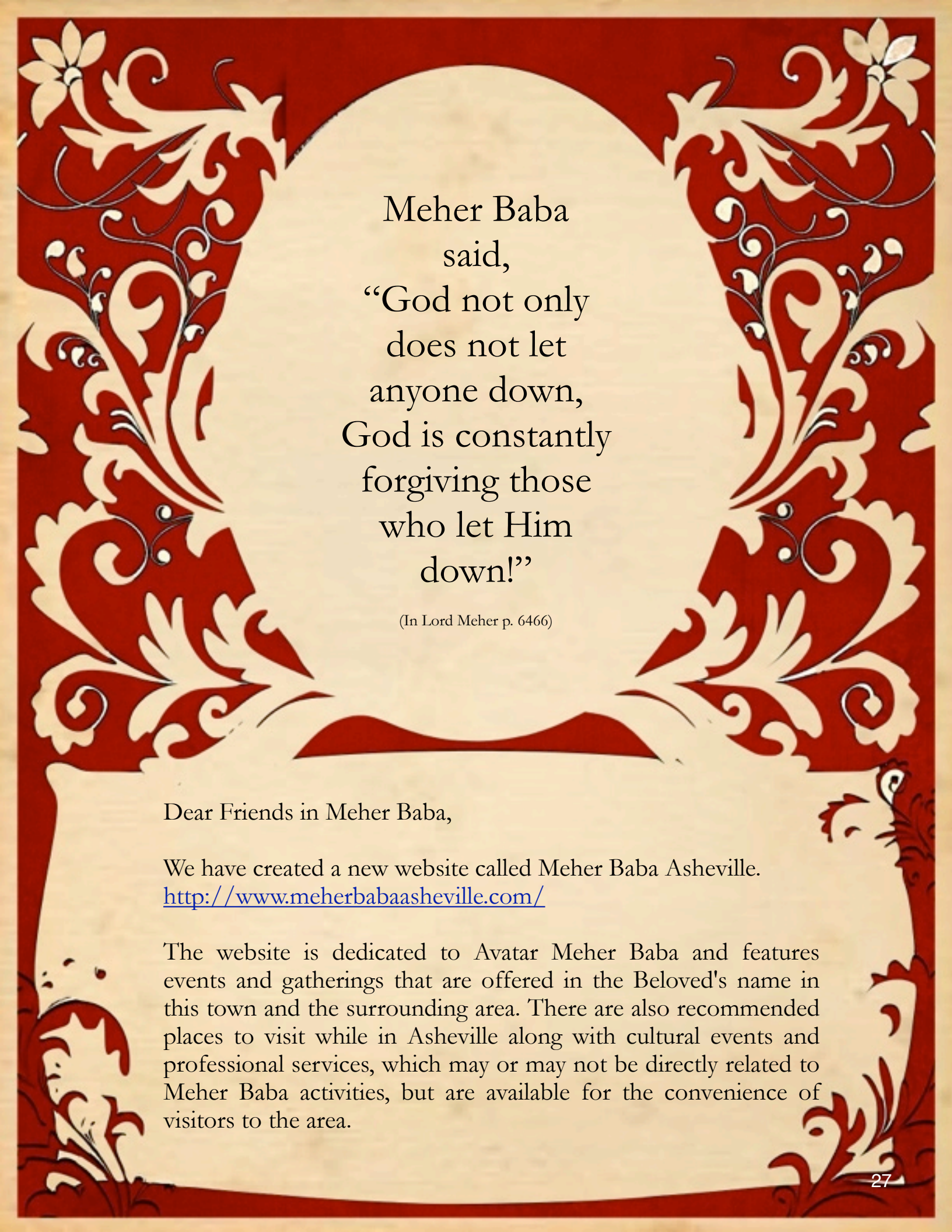
# Discipleship

The seed of your good intentions  
planted these gifts that you now enjoy  
It may seem that someone else  
has laid out this feast  
But in reality you have set  
the table yourself  
You are continually at My banquet  
if you want to be  
What you focus on grows a garden  
The halo of love around you  
comes from the inside out  
It is you who have determined  
which ingredients to combine  
and I savor the aroma  
you have placed before Me

Marla Faith



where I receive my poems -- Marla

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a light cream color, set against a deep red background. The border frames the central text and the lower section of the page.

Meher Baba  
said,  
“God not only  
does not let  
anyone down,  
God is constantly  
forgiving those  
who let Him  
down!”

(In Lord Meher p. 6466)

Dear Friends in Meher Baba,

We have created a new website called Meher Baba Asheville.

<http://www.meherbabaasheville.com/>

The website is dedicated to Avatar Meher Baba and features events and gatherings that are offered in the Beloved's name in this town and the surrounding area. There are also recommended places to visit while in Asheville along with cultural events and professional services, which may or may not be directly related to Meher Baba activities, but are available for the convenience of visitors to the area.

## Interview with Fereshteh Azad, by Laurent Weichberger

Hi Fereshteh, let's start with these questions, and then bounce back and forth until we are happy with this email interview, okay? Jai Meher Baba!

*So, Fereshteh sounds like a Persian name. Where were you born, and how did you make it to Chicago, where I saw you last (when was it, last year now?)*

Jai Baba Laurent. Yes, Fereshteh is a Persian name, meaning Angel. I was born in Iran and moved to the United States when I was 17, to go to college and to make the US my new permanent home. I landed in Minnesota first, attending the University of Minnesota, and then started my IT career there after getting my MBA. Then moved around the country a bit because of my husband's work: Texas, Indiana, and now for the last 23 years I have been living in Chicago with my family. Oh, and a couple of years in Arizona too, which is where I heard about Meher Baba.

*You have been working on Hafez translations, from the native Farsi. Did you grow up with Farsi as your first language? And how different is the Farsi of Hafez from the Farsi spoken around the world today?*

Yes, I have been working on and off with Hafez's poetry since my trip to Shiraz in 2009. Farsi is my second language, second to Azari, my first native language, which was the language we spoke at home in Tabriz. But the official language in Iran and my schooling was in Persian and French. English came last in high school.

The Farsi of Hafez is more than 700 years old, so yes, it is somewhat different from the Farsi of today in the sense that Hafez used many poetic and spiritual metaphoric terminologies that would not be in common use today, but the literature of Iran is so rich with this type of language, and as Iranians we have been so immersed in it from childhood, that it seems natural.

Of course as a child in school, I did not have as much appreciation for the beauty and spiritual depth of this type of poetry as I do today.

*Besides the Farsi, I have heard Meher Baba, and many others say it is almost impossible to properly translate Hafez into English because of the layers, and meanings, and poetry. Is that true? And if it is, why are you trying to do it, are you a masochist? :)*

Ha ha. Yes, perhaps I am. The thing with Hafez, as you well know, is that a lot of his poetry is coming from the highest state of consciousness, and of course, this state is impossible for us to really understand or know, until we are there ourselves. Having said that, I feel that with Meher Baba's teachings on the same or similar spiritual topics and states Hafez touches on, along with a steady meditation on the poetry and a lot of research and assistance from various sources, one could approximate or try to come close to the essence of the treasure of Hafez. It is a beautiful form of meditation for me, and I lose track of time completely when I am working on a Ghazal. It is a humbling and worthwhile quest. I started this work in order to come closer to and appreciate Hafez more personally, plus I had a bit of coaxing from Baba as well. The work itself is never ending it seems. Always finding myself going back to improve the ones I have translated. As my own writing and knowledge base improves and grows, so do the translations, at least I sincerely hope so.

*How did you come to hear about Meher Baba exactly?*

Ah you may have to wait to read my memoirs... which I have written, but have not had the time or motivation to go back to revise, edit, etc. But that time may still be coming in the future as Baba wishes. But to say here briefly, I heard about Meher Baba at a time when He must have known I was stuck spiritually and emotionally, between the proverbial rock and a hard place, with nowhere to go

but to plead to God for help. At the time, I had been following Yogananda's Kriya Yoga path for four years prior, a devoted meditator, but deeply longing for a community that practiced a freer and more natural expression of divine love. I was not seeking another Master, but I knew something deep was missing in the equation of my practice. I had also started longing for my roots, for Hafez, and Rumi. I felt that I was not making spiritual progress beyond the Kriya Yoga "trance" state... It is really a long and layered story that Baba orchestrated skillfully and perfectly! I first heard about Meher Baba from a friend, who told me her colleague at work was also a poet and follower of Meher Baba, and I should meet her, that I would like her. So we met, Nancy Shev and I, and we exchanged our poems, and shared our stories, and when I asked her about the subject of her poetry, Meher Baba, she suggested I meet her husband Steve. Through listening to Stephen telling me his amazing story of coming to Baba, I felt His Presence and Bliss, and I thought to myself: "Yogis meditate for years to get this, and here I am feeling it by merely hearing about Meher Baba! There must be something special here." And then I saw His picture, and I was toast. I recognized Him, in a deep and mysterious way. More importantly, I felt He knew me better than I knew myself. Shortly thereafter, I went to India to His Tomb shrine.

*You are also a poet in your own right. When did you start writing poems, and what inspired you? Is that still the same inspiration or do you have many muses?*

Yes, I wrote some poetry when I was very young, but mostly journalled throughout my life. Around 1997-1998, when I was at the early stages of my spiritual awakening in this lifetime, I started writing a lot more. I don't even know if I can call it poetry. I just record my experiences, feelings and thoughts in short verse form. Some say there is an internal rhythm to my writing. I am my own worst critic. Very shy about sharing... but most of my Baba poems are universal, probably. Most of my writing is just that, a chronicle of my spiritual journey. My muse has always

been love and longing... Thankfully over the years it has evolved from the soul mate kind of longing, to the real longing for God.

*Do you feel that your background gives you a different perspective on the evolving Meher Baba community (or movement)?*

You mean my background as an Iranian? And perhaps also as a previous practitioner of Meditation/Raja Yoga? If that is what you mean, I must say that when I saw Meher Baba's picture and realized He is who He says He is, my first thought was, "Wait till the Iranians find out about Him. They will recognize Him en masse." He has the perfect Iranian features, and maybe something else too which is hard to explain. The Kriya Yoga teachings and practices totally prepared me to recognize Him as Krishna. God Speaks has the same haunting music as the Bhagavad Gita. What Baba said about yogis and the path of meditation were most enlightening, and relieved me of my own personal dilemmas. My love for Jesus which evolved and flourished during my Yogananda days helped me to recognize Him as the Christ. My Iranian roots and Islam prepared me to recognize Him as the Rasool, which incidentally, is the terminology my Baba contact used to refer to Him initially. It got my attention!

As we evolve individually, so will the community as a whole. We have to always keep in mind that Baba wants harmony and love from us. We need to try to understand each other, before jumping the gun on hasty judgments, categorizations and divisions within our own community. We must strive to avoid the mistakes of past religions.

*Now that the Mandali (close disciples) of Meher Baba are almost all gone, what do you see as next steps for our community, and is Hafez involved in that evolution?*

Hafez will always be involved as a timeless treasure... hopefully not just for the Meher Baba community but for the growing number of spiritually inclined humanity as well. My hope is that we can

have more people becoming familiar with Hafez and deepening their appreciation of the beauty therein. Yes this is a new era for the Baba world with the passing of almost all the Mandali now, and we will hopefully carry and nurture the torch and example of their love and selfless service to Baba, to His lovers and to all we come in contact with.

*Of course the elephant in any Hafez room is the recent work by Ladinsky. How is Danny's work with Hafez received by the Persian community and what do you see as its relative value.*

I can only speak on this subject from my own point of view, and not a whole community. When I first heard that there was a translation of Hafez in English in the Baba community, I was very excited. As I said, I had been longing to reconnect with my roots and the Persian poetry at that time. So I read Danny's books and really liked the poetry. But I was not sure if they were translations or renderings, or what they were. Then later on when I started translating Hafez and becoming more immersed in it, I realized that Ladinsky's work seemed to have no relationship to the Hafez ghazals I was reading and translating. So I asked him on a couple of occasions to help me find and correlate his poetry with the original ghazals. All Hafez poems are easily identifiable. That is when he told me that they were renderings, that he read other translations in English, and then wrote his poems based on the inspiration he might get from a line or a word, etc.

Many people are inspired by Danny's poems, as I was initially, but perhaps the thing to remember about his work is that his work is not Hafez translations, since he does not speak or read Farsi, but something else. Whatever one may be comfortable calling it. Renderings, inspirations, etc. It is unfortunate that his publisher continues to promote the book as Hafez translations. I think Danny should take more credit for his own poetic abilities.

*So, who is Meher Baba? Also, Hafez uses some phrases I believe, such as "Zoroastrian (Magiian) Master," and "Saheb-e-Zaman," is that accurate? What do those phrases mean in Farsi?*

Who is Meher Baba, you ask? I believe He is who He says He is... The Avatar, the Rassoul, the Christ, the Ancient One, the One who has been coming since the beginning, and will continue to come till the very end. The Eternal tireless, patient One!

Saheb-e-Zaman is the name I know from childhood, a Name highly revered in Iran, as the Awaited One, the twelfth Imam Mahdi, who disappeared, and Muslims await his return during the end times. It literally means "the One who owns time". What a perfect name! Hafez frequently refers to Pir-e-Moghan in his Ghazals, which I understand is the Avatar or the Realized Master, or the God-Man. Mogh is also the name for the followers of Zoroaster. So it could be inferred that he was referring to the Master of Zoroastrians, Zartosht or perhaps even to Meher Baba, who was also Zoroastrian!

*Baba quotes the Hafiz poem, "Befitting a fortunate slave..." and Meher Baba follows the world over know this poem as a result. Is this a famous poem in the Persian community as well, or did Baba push this forward and make it well known for us?*

The three well-known couplets that Baba has quoted and emphasized from Hafez, the ones He asked to be recited by His Mandali just before He dropped the body, are from three different Ghazals of Hafez. I feel Baba made these particular couplets come to life, as if He selected the most poignant lines in a bouquet of Hafiz that He wanted us to imbibe and remember especially.

*Of all the poems from Hafiz, what is one of your favorites? And may we have your translation of this poem for our readers (both Farsi and English).*

As I work with Hafez, it is like a treasure hunt. I cannot say one is a favorite yet, because they all have some beautiful gift and message in them. Maybe when I translate all of them, Baba willing, I will find a favorite.

*Is there anything more you would like to share with our OmPoint readers?*

May He help us all to love Him more and more, and to remember Him as often as possible. May He help us to know and experience that He is the real Self and the doer in everything and everyone. Simple, yet most difficult, isn't it?

For now, may I share with you the translation of one of the Ghazals in its entirety from which Baba quoted?

فراق یار نه آن میکند که بتوان گفت

شنیدهام سخنی خوش که پیر کنعان گفت

کنایتیست که از روزگار هجران گفت

حدیث هول قیامت که گفت واعظ شهر

که هر چه گفت برید صبا پریشان گفت

نشان یار سفرکرده از که پرسم باز

به ترک صحبت یاران خود چه آسان گفت

فغان که آن مه نامهربان مهرگسل

که دل به درد تو خو کرد و ترک درمان گفت

من و مقام رضا بعد از این و شکر رقیب

که تخم خوشدلی این است پیر دهقان گفت

غم کهن به می سالخورده دفع کنید

که این سخن به مثل باد با سلیمان گفت

گره به باد مزن گر چه بر مراد رود

و را که گفت که این زال ترک داستان گفت  
به مهلتی که سپهرت دهد ز راه مرو

قبول کرد به جان هر سخن که جانان گفت

مزن ز چون و چرا دم که بنده مقبل

من این نگفتم آن کس که گفت بهتان گفت

که گفت حافظ از اندیشه تو آمد باز

Ghazal 88

I heard these sweet words from the Pir of Canaan<sup>1</sup>:

It is futile to describe the agony of separation from the Friend

When the preacher speaks of the fright of Judgment Day

It is but a hint about the state of separation

Where shall I get a straight answer about the whereabouts of my nomad Beloved  
The message brought by the morning breeze was garbled and meaningless

Mercy! How easily my cruel-hearted, promise-breaking moon  
Abandons the company of His friends

From now on it is me, contentment, and gratefulness to the rival<sup>2</sup>  
The heart has become accustomed to pain, and has abandoned the cure

The remedy for old pain is aged wine  
This is the very seed of happiness, said the wise Pir of Dehghan<sup>3</sup>

Don't tie a knot with the wind<sup>4</sup>, even if it blows in your favor  
This is how the wind advised King Soleyman<sup>5</sup>

Don't be derailed by the window of opportunity the world gives you  
Who told you that this old twisted man has given up deceit?

Don't ask why and what -- since the fortunate slave<sup>6</sup>

Wholeheartedly accepts every command of the Master (Beloved, Soul of souls)

Who said Hafez has given up thoughts of You?

I never said that -- whoever said it, was slandering me.

## Ghazal Notes

1. Pir of Canaan – The father of Prophet Joseph. The son was thrown inside a well by the brothers due to their jealousy of the father's love for him.
2. The rival is someone who keeps the Beloved away from the lover, by protecting and hiding the Beloved.
3. Pir of Dehghan was a famous and wise man of knowledge – also a renowned wine-maker.
4. Don't trust the promises of the world, even if they blow in your favor, they will eventually betray you.
5. It is said that the wind would bring King Soleyman all news of the kingdom – but even this very wind told him not to trust it, because it was unreliable, and in fact eventually betrayed him.
6. A devotee who has been accepted by the Master.

.....

*Thank you Fereshteh...*

You are very welcome. Thank you for the opportunity to share.



Meher Baba with a white-hot heart

Hi everyone. There is a new webpage at <https://sites.google.com/site/meherabadmoments> that has music and more from Meherabad. Please help spread the word about it via e-mail, social media, websites, newsletters, and magazines, etc.  
Jai Baba, Patrick Finley

"Nobody suffers in vain, for true freedom is spiritual freedom, and suffering is a ladder toward it.

Man unknowingly suffers for God, and God knowingly suffers for man."



Avatar Meher Baba

## *May I Meditate? – The Case of the Constant Companion*

By H. Talat Halman

A common understanding about our lives with Meher Baba is that we do not practice any special forms of meditation. And this understanding persists even though the Discourses contains 50 pages on “The Types of Meditation.” Here I want to introduce some ideas that may clarify this question. One example of the idea that Baba lovers do not practice meditation appears in the recent film “Meher Baba: Highlights of His Life, Work, and Message,” which narrates, “...[T]here’s not much of what one might expect in terms of traditional religion or spiritual practices around Meher Baba. There is no meditation.” And to some extent I can respect what that means. For example Adi K. Irani has said in more detail:

Baba says that we need not do any sadhana (spiritual discipline). We need not to do any yoga or puja (the path of attainment which usually emphasizes external observance of religious rituals). We do not have to exert ourselves in this manner at all to understand Him, feel Him, and see Him. Baba says that He resides in our hearts twenty-four hours of the day, and if we really want to see Him and feel Him – feel His presence – we can do it.

But I feel there is more to the story, particularly as Adi also says:

In a greater sense, in a more intense sense, we should think of Meher Baba every spare moment of our lives – as we walk, as we talk, as we eat, as we move, as we do our work. It is something like a constant prayer...Remembrance should be so constant that it becomes second nature. Every spare moment our minds should turn to Him and begin loving Him.

Such talk reminds me of the great Christian spiritual classic, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, in which the narrator discovers how to fulfill Paul’s injunction to “pray without ceasing,” (I Thess. 5:17) by constantly reciting the hesychastic Jesus prayer, “Lord

Jesus Christ have mercy on me.” (Luke 18:38)

(A common Sufi 'Zikr' or spoken 'meditation' is 'Astafghirullah', or 'Allah forgive me'. -- KM, ed.)

In the same vein as in the quote from Adi K. Irani, Meher Baba has described remembrance of Him as both a “duty” and a relationship of constant companionship in a most intimate way:

I want you to make me your constant companion. Think of me more than you think of yourself. Your duty is to keep me constantly with you in your thoughts, speech, and action.

And Baba emphasizes this indwelling constant Companionship as friendship:

...[Y]ou should make Me your friend. But remember this: always keep this friend with you. Don’t forget. When you eat remember your friend; when you play remember Him. When you study, that time too first remember your friend, and then study. When you sleep, remember Me and then sleep.



Avatar Meher Baba Center of Jubilee Hills (Hyderabad)  
followers meditating on the photo of Meher Baba

Adi echoes this idea of remembering Meher Baba at every “spare moment” of daily life when he writes:

Perform all your duties very faithfully; do not neglect them. But every spare moment of the day, without mental exertion, without any strong sadhana, you can continue remembering Him and creating the circumstances whereby His love will be evoked in your heart.

So while on the one hand we are not instructed to do formal sessions of meditation, we are called in essence to be--as much as this might be possible--in a continuous natural meditation and a constant companionship with Meher Baba. Meher Baba asks us to keep Him in our thoughts, in our words, and in our deeds. Sufis call such practice of constant contact *rabita* (connection). In some measure such involvement, inclusion, and inherence of Meher Baba in our thoughts, words, and actions might be called meditation. But instead of requiring lengthy meditation sessions, only “spare moments” are required. Similarly I have heard the currently popular meditation teacher Eckhart Tolle encourage people to

base their practice on “mini meditations throughout the day.”

In *Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba*, Meher Baba identifies “four quarters of the day” that Kabir called “signposts.” Meher Baba said that first thing in the morning (at the “first quarter,” or the “first signpost”) one should think for one second – even only one second -- about Baba, or as Baba calls it “...dress your soul with Baba.” And then Baba says to repeat this one-second remembrance at noon, and again at 5:00 pm and finally before retiring – “*Do it for four seconds every day... This is the beginning of sabaj dhyān (natural knowledge)*. Here Meher Baba did not specify who should practice these one-second meditations or who need not practice them.

During the same “Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba,” Meher Baba assigned to the participants who were present (not necessarily to all Baba lovers) something like a formal meditation practice:

“From tomorrow on,” Baba began, after the pictures had been shown [two symbolic paintings by Rano Gayley and three photographs of Meher Baba], “I want you all to think exclusively of Me for a half hour every day for seven days. You should each sit aloof from the others, and select your own spot, close your eyes and just try to bring Baba’s figure before your mind’s eye.

This practice of “bring[ing] Baba’s figure before your mind’s eye” resembles a meditation called in Sufism *tasawwur* ([meditation on] the form [of the master]). In these examples Meher Baba has given instructions to remember both His name and form.

In the early 1970s Eruch once described meditation to a Baba lover who had asked about its practice. In his reply Eruch spoke of “spontaneous meditation” in which Meher Baba is one’s “constant Companion:”

Meher Baba has revealed to us who lived with Him that true meditation is to remember Him constantly in all our

everyday life and acts; whether we eat or drink, feast or fast, attend to nature’s call or take a bath, whether we are busy in the office or with business, or relaxing in bed, whether we are meditating in a place or making merry, resting or moving about, we should always think of Him and have Him always as our constant Companion. There is no better meditation than this.



This is spontaneous meditation. There is no set time, place, posture, principle, or austerity for this meditation where every breath is dedicated to His remembrance. Eventually we totally forget ourselves and live in His Grace alone. Blessed indeed is such a life.

This is a meditation that includes loving Meher Baba as the Divine Beloved and “our constant companion.” In Adi K. Irani’s words:

And I ask, “What is the greatest expression of love in one’s life?” It is to try to make our Beloved our constant companion. Think of Him, read about Him, let your mind run to Him at every moment of your life, and try to make Him your own as much as possible.

The outcome of remembering Baba is love for Baba. In this light Meher Baba said:

“So in order to love Me, you must start with remembering Me all the time, then you will see Me as I truly am and only then will you fall truly in love with Me.”

In an exceptional case in which the inquirer already had an established formal meditation practice, Meher Baba instructed this man on how to practice his meditation more perfectly. (However Baba did not intend these instructions to apply to any one else but this inquirer.) Still Meher Baba’s instructions to the man are worthy of note as they resemble the spontaneous meditation of keeping Meher Baba as one’s constant companion while envisioning His form we have mentioned above.

At the beginning of your meditation, Baba wants you to sit before a large photo of Him. Look intently at Baba’s picture and try to fix His form in your mind’s eye, so that even when you close your eyes the image remains vivid. If you feel that the image of Baba’s form has faded, open your eyes and again fix your gaze on His picture. While doing this repeat, “Parabrahma, Paramatma.” Don’t involve any other yoga practice or try to awaken the kundalini. Let your meditation be only on Baba and for Baba.

You should also know well that these instructions are only for you and you should not advocate this practice to others. Baba sends His love and blessings to you.

Still we have seen in the previous examples that taking Meher Baba’s name, keeping Him as our constant Companion, and envisioning Meher Baba’s face or form are meditative activities encouraged by Meher Baba and the mandali. As Adi K. Irani summarizes,

Baba says, “It is very easy. Think of Me, remember Me, read My literature.” You may talk with the people who have had long contact

with Baba. You may meditate upon Him. You may think about Him much of your time. You need not allot a fixed time of an hour or so in the morning or at night. But just as you sit, walk, or do your work, or put a morsel of food in your mouth, or before you fall asleep or after you arise, remember Him. It is very easy. It is not difficult at all.

A fundamental point in this remembrance is that as Adi K. Irani repeatedly stresses, Meher Baba is to be found in our hearts and that it is in our hearts where he resides.

Baba says, “I reside in your heart all the time, twenty-four hours, every minute of your life. I am there with every breath that you breathe. With every heartbeat, I am there. The only thing is for you to create the circumstances by which you will be able to love me.

As Meher Baba said in the quote above, by remembering Baba we come to love Baba. This fact that Meher Baba is to be found in our hearts deserves special attention, as Meher Baba said in His statement of His Mission to the West, “The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life.”

In recent decades scientists have been doing experimental research on meditation that proves that meditation strengthens the brain and its functions. A scientific field has developed in this brain research called neurotheology. Andrew Newberg, a leading neuroscientist and neurotheologian, shows in his experimental research that meditation for 12 minutes a day for eight weeks produces measurable results in the brain’s resting activity and provides the benefits of increased attention, concentration, and memory. Among the types of meditations Newberg has researched are those which use a short phrase (which the terms “Meher Baba” or “Baba” would qualify as) and those which involve visualization. In some of the examples above, Meher Baba has given us both these activities of taking his Name and visualizing his face or form.

One of the basic instructions is to take the name of Meher Baba. Bal Natu explains the significance and power of Meher Baba’s Name and goes on to even encourage a daily practice.

Imbued with love and compassion, the Avatar of the Age Himself chooses the Name by which He will be addressed by humanity, for whose sake He descended into Illusion. So the Name of the Avatar has a unique status and significance in the world of sound. Whosoever takes His Name is guided by the Name itself to that Original Word from which the entire creation sprang forth. Therefore, whether one utters it wholeheartedly, half-heartedly, “quarter-heartedly,” or no-heartedly, the Avatar’s Name has a matchless sanctifying effect. It loosens the bonds of Illusion and awakens the individual to the Reality of God residing in the heart....Is it not befitting for us to set aside some period, however small, every day during which to say his Name? We do so many things as a matter of routine. Why then should we not routinely repeat the Name of the Avatar and focus our minds and our hearts on Him.

Bal Natu presents a beautiful summary of Baba’s words on this natural meditation with the constant companion, this remembrance of Baba especially through repeating His Name:

Meher Baba states:

I and God are One....Therefore think only of Me and constantly repeat My name. The more you think of Me, the more you will realize My love for you. Think of Me, remain cheerful in your trials and I am with you, helping you. The remedy for all ills is to remember Me constantly and wholeheartedly. Think always of Me, whatever you may be doing, then gradually you will realize that it is I doing everything through you. The best course for My lover is to remember Me wholeheartedly as much as one can... and leave the rest to Me.

All of this points to a fundamental existential issue in our lives. We are to remember Meher Baba both -- to quote the words of the Rosary--“now and at the hour of our death.” Meher Baba explains that a major goal of taking His name in the now is to train ourselves to be able to take His Name at the time of our death, as He explains in “My Wish:”

**I say with my Divine authority to each and all that whosoever takes my name at the time of breathing his last comes to me. So do not forget to remember me in your last moments. Unless you start remembering me from now on, it will be difficult to remember me when your end approaches. You should start practicing from now on. Even if you take my name only once every day, you will not forget to remember me in your dying moments.**

So we see in the natural meditation of -- and especially with--Meher Baba as our constant companion, that we have Meher Baba’s name as our *japa* or *zikr*. In terms of devotion we have the *bhakti* component of love of--and love from--Avatar Meher Baba. Meher Baba has also called thinking of him for one second at each of the day’s “four quarters” or “signposts,” *sahaj dhyān* (natural knowledge). So in remembering Him we are embarking on the pursuit of *jñāna* (knowledge). Karma yoga includes remembering Meher Baba while acting in the world. In these terms Baba has said, “With the understanding that Baba is in everyone, try to help and serve others.” And there is the meditation on His form (*tasawwur*) like that practiced in Sufism.

This means that in loving, following, and serving Meher Baba, and as rooted in remembering Meher Baba and His Name, we are naturally practicing the three major yogas outlined extensively in the *Bhagavad Gita*: *Bhakti* (loving devotion), *Jñāna* (knowledge), and *Karma* (right action). And we are able to fulfill these yogas so simply and naturally: we

remember Meher Baba and love Him; we repeat his Name; we envision his form and face; and, while serving in the world, we serve on his behalf knowing that Meher Baba is in those we serve. In short, we practice the essence of meditation by remembering Meher Baba's Name and keeping Meher Baba in our thoughts, words, and deeds as our "Constant Companion."

## End Notes

- Meher Baba, *The Discourses*. pp. 201-251. Due to the intricate complexity of this material, we shall have to leave it for another essay. Here I will build on Meher Baba and the mandali's most simple, and direct comments on meditation.
- "Meher Baba: Highlights of His Life, Work, and Message," Meherabad Films, 2011, at approximately 16:40. (Italics mine.)
- Adi K. Irani, *Just to Love Him: Talks and Essays About Meher Baba*, pp. 106-107



- Aki K. Irani, *Just to Love Him*. P. 14
- *The Way of a Pilgrim* (anonymous, c. 1884) trans., Nina A. Toumanova. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2008).
- Meher Baba, quoted in Rick Chapman, *The Compassionate One*. 1987, p. 36
- Meher Baba, quoted in *Letters from the Mandali*, Vol. 2, pp. 151-152. As quoted in Christina Beymer, "The Avatar Meher Baba 2013 Calendar," April 2013 page.
- Adi K. Irani, *Just to Love Him*, p. 10.
- Eckhart Tolle, "Conversations on Compassion," Youtube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M00VLswZdyc> (at 28:30, 55:50, and especially 59:00-59:35) accessed on May 8, 2013.
- Malcolm Schloss and Charles Purdom, *Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba: September 11 – September 30, 1954*. Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Press, 1979, pp. 77-78.
- Malcolm Schloss and Charles Purdom, *Three Incredible Weeks with Meher Baba: September 11 – September 30, 1954*. Myrtle Beach: Sheriar Press, 1979, p. 44.
- Eruch Jessawala, quoted in Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man Meher Baba*. Vol. IV (January 1-March 6, 1954), p. 27.
- Adi K. Irani, *Just to Love Him*. p. 14.
- Meher Baba quoted in Eruch Jessawala, *The Ancient One: A Disciple's Memoirs of Meher Baba*. Ed. Naosherwan Anzar. (Englishtown, NJ: Beloved Books, 1985), p. 97
- Adi K. Irani, quoted in Bal Natu, *Glimpses of the God-Man Meher Baba*. Vol. IV (January 1-March 6, 1954), p. 24. Bal Natu explains that this text is a paraphrase of Adi's communication.
- Adi K. Irani, *Just to Love Him*. pp. 107-108. Italics mine.
- Meher Baba, *God Speaks*. P. xxxvi.
- Andrew Newberg, M.D. and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 2009), p. 3-130, 159-160. Newberg has researched meditation practices performed by novice lay people using a sacred phrase, Tibetan Buddhist meditators doing visualization, and Franciscan nuns doing Centering Prayer.
- Bal Natu, *The Samadhi: Star of Infinity*. (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar, 1987), p. 95.
- Bal Natu, *The Samadhi: Star of Infinity*. (Myrtle Beach: Sheriar, 1987), p. 96.
- Meher Baba, "My Wish." <http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/mywish.html> Accessed May 10, 2013.
- Meher Baba, "My Wish." <http://www.avatarmeherbaba.org/erics/mywish.html> Accessed May 9, 2013.

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# Bobbi Bernstein CD 'Dance For Joy'

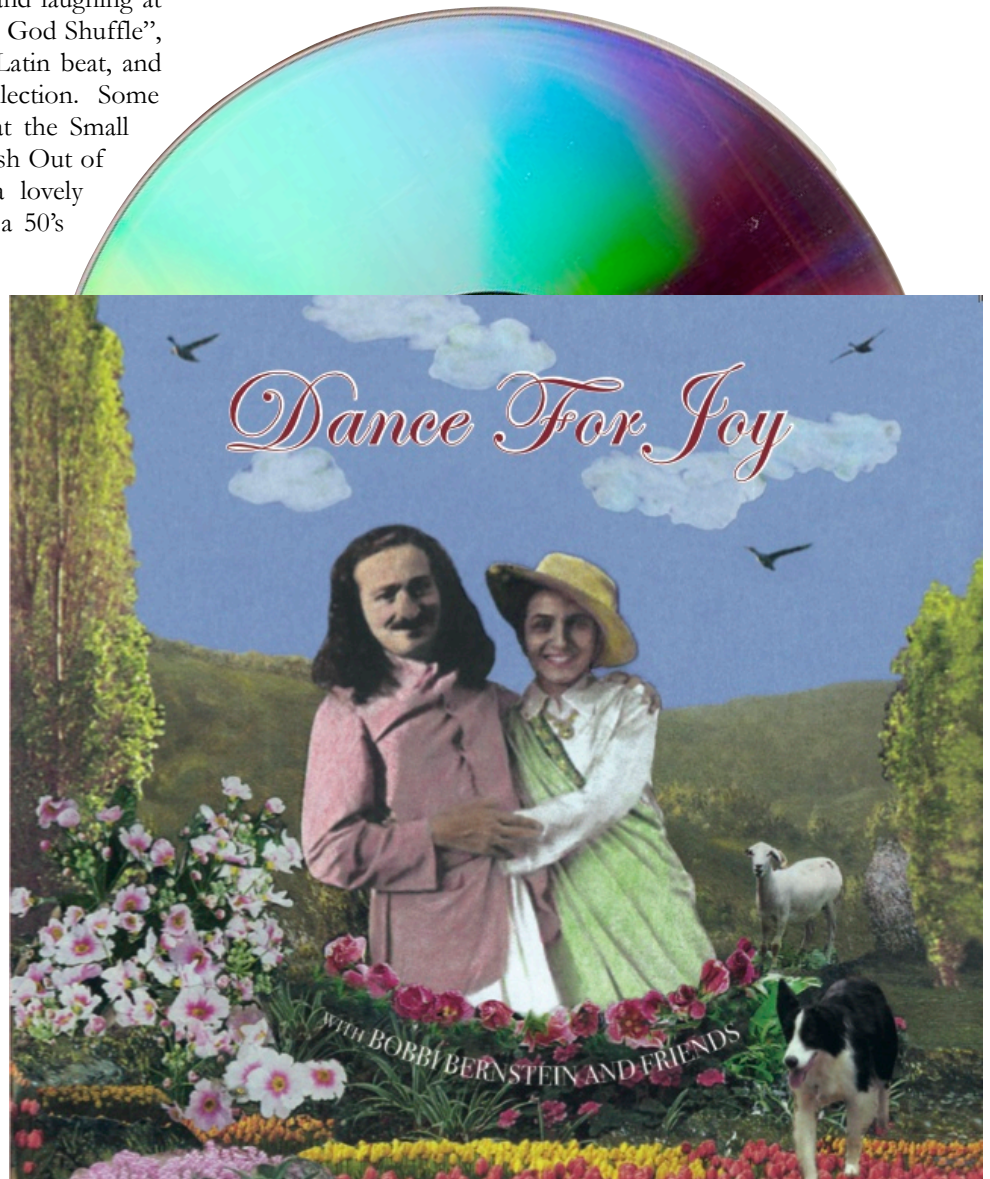
In her new CD, *Dance for Joy*, Bobbi Bernstein sings out her love for Baba loud and clear. I can imagine sitting in her living room, singing, dancing, and laughing at her antics. From the first song, “Addicted to God Shuffle”, one wants to move. Ragtime, rock ‘n roll, Latin beat, and pop are all incorporated into the 16 song collection. Some of the highlights for me were “Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff”, a good reminder for many of us, “Fish Out of Water”, “Mehera’s Waltz”, a ballad with a lovely piano arrangement, and “Never Give Up”, a 50’s style song with vocal backups. Many of Bobbi’s songs are up-beat and catchy, however, I would need a song sheet for the lyrics since they are not always easy to pick up and fit into the rhythms of the songs.

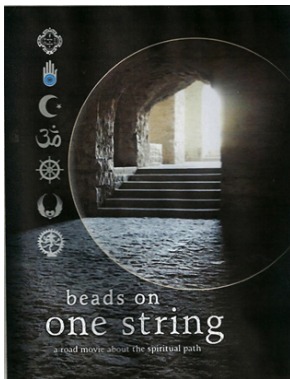
Bobbi bases some of her lyrics on quotes taken from Baba, Bal Natu, and others and are often fairly long, direct quotes. This sometimes works for her and sometimes against her. The quotes do not always allow for a smooth flow of rhythm and the wording works against the melody. The beat becomes stilted especially when Bobbi is trying to enunciate every word clearly. Because of this the songs take on a choppy, repetitive feel even though her songs are really quite varied.

I am not sure the CD does Bobbi justice. I imagine being with her in person is a whole different experience. Her voice is not her forte and her quips and improvisation come off as corny and dated on the CD where in person they would feel more spontaneous and entertaining and her vocals would be more relaxed.

Her songs however, were marvelous, awkward wording of quotes and all. I would like to hear other artists with stronger voices perform their own renditions of Bobbi’s songs and see what comes of it. She has a real talent for writing relatable, catchy, and sometimes, moving lyrics. Her tunes vary and she uses a wonderful variety of genres. In the end I must say the Bobbi grew on me. As I delved more deeply into her songs and delivery I thought her to be someone with whom I would like to spend a musical evening. And I’ll admit I would like to be one of the singer who tries on her songs.

Debby Blackman  
Tucson Arizona  
June 1, 2013





## BEADS ON ONE STRING: **Spanish Seminar 2013**

I have not come to establish any cult, society or organization; nor even to establish a new religion. The religion that I shall give teaches the Knowledge of the One behind the many. The book that I shall make people read is the book of the heart that holds the key to the mystery of life. I shall bring about a happy blending of the head and the heart. I shall revitalize all religions and cults, and bring them together like beads on one string.

Meher Baba

Spain has been chosen in order to reach into the memory of the time when Islam, Judaism and Christianity lived side by side and produced one of the most amazing cultural and spiritual high points.

**Theme:** The Creativity between Man and God

**Dates:** October 2013, arriving Friday 25. p.m. leaving Tuesday 29. a.m.

The seminar is supported by the Beads On One String Foundation with the intent to open up a communication with persons of the great spiritual pathways to circumvent the age old habit pattern of building a fence around beliefs and devotion, which so quickly attract institutional structures and hierarchies. To focus on the creativity, which has come about through the intimate dialogue between a devotee and God, we hope to sidestep information according to academic standards and seize the opportunity to communicate that personal and ever amazing contact or relationship between man and God.

### **Speakers:**

Rabbi Larry Tabick, Judaic mystic tradition

Valerie Quinlivan, Catholic tradition

Ignacio Bejar, Sufi tradition, musician

Krishna Shukla Hindu tradition, musician

Renate Moritz, Meher Baba teachings, visual artist

**A one day pilgrimage will take place to Cordoba to visit the only remaining synagogue and the Mesquita, where mosque and Christian church intertwine. From there we plan to travel to Granada to reach the Alhambra for a planned evening concert of Sufi Music.**

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Molino de Santillan, in the hills, close to Malaga and Malaga airport. [www.molinosantillan.es](http://www.molinosantillan.es)

**COSTS FOR SEMINAR/PILGRIMAGE IS £ 285.00 IT INCLUDES**

Accommodation for 4 nights B & B plus evening meals for Friday, Saturday and Sunday and lunches on Saturday and Sunday. Pilgrimage day on Monday includes a packed lunch but NOT the evening meal in Granada.

Transport costs are included in the price for the Pilgrimage Day.

50% deposit by cheque required to reserve a place. Final payment made at the Seminar.

Car hire at airport can be arranged privately and info on public transport will be included on information sheet available, when you have registered.

Please book early as places are limited.

For more information or questions, contact:

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# Forgiveness with the Christ-Avatar



## Exploring the Universal Spirituality of Forgiveness

A two day seminar: Saturday April 27, 11am – 5pm &  
Sunday April 28, 11am – 5pm  
At the home of Karen and Allan Talbot, Moraga CA  
Facilitated by Soleil Brigham and Laurent Weichberger  
Half Moon Bay, CA ~ June 2013

This article is formatted with sharing first from Soleil, and then from Laurent, with feedback from participants mixed in...

### Soleil shares:

For me the Forgiveness seminar with the SF bay area Baba group was the most intimate seminar I've participated in so far. It was my third time helping to facilitate a group in forgiveness processes and the first two day seminar, all the rest were only one day. Spending two days listening to such open sharing and discussion really gave me an intimate feeling of connection with a group of people I've never met

before. I feel the time we spent in prayer and meditation really anchored in Baba's presence, and my sense is that I tuned into the inner spiritual links which Baba talked about. When people share deeply about what's alive and true for them, and they feel heard rather than judged, it promotes intimacy in the heart, and especially so in a Baba group where His presence seems to manifest beautifully. For over a week afterwards my heart felt more open and tender, I felt I "met" Baba's Love and intimately personal Presence within myself through the gathering. I gained insights into facilitating a group, how to share more from my own experience, and what does and doesn't seem to contribute to the well-being of others in the context of group work.

Immediately after the seminar I felt very drawn to continue meeting with SF Baba group members to engage in this spiritually fruitful work.

There is a great power in the coming together of a group of people through the inner-links with Christ. My experience is that a two day seminar with the intention of forgiveness allows for the presence of Baba to link the hearts of His Lovers.

"To me, the most remarkable thing about the workshop was the high degree of trust that participants showed one another. The result was a high degree of honest sharing and open vulnerability. That, in turn, led to expressions of caring and love seldom seen. Talking about forgiveness turned out to be a good vehicle for getting the group to come together." – B.B.

"This workshop was enlivening and wonderful! It was filled with Baba's love and really helped to bring me out of some foggy confusion and back into a light, clear and open space! I was able to release a particular issue I wanted support with, and I feel much more confident and capable to approach that particular relationship with forgiveness." --S.T.

## Laurent shares:

Soleil and I were invited many months ago to facilitate a seminar that we have titled Forgiveness with the Christ-Avatar, (or sometimes Forgiveness with Meher Baba). The previous seminars had been held in Sacramento, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Myrtle Beach. All the previous seminars had been less than two days duration. With the extra day added to the agenda, we were able to expand quite a bit the offerings we had planned.

It was wonderful to see so many Baba sisters and brothers attend, as we sat in a circle (in the back yard) I counted 11 women and 11 men, including Soleil and myself. Because of the long standing work of Dick Anthony in this community, we had invited him as a co-facilitator. The days were scheduled to have two, two hour sessions each day, so four sessions total. This pattern of seminar work was the same that Don Stevens instructed me to use and Don and I had traveled around the world using this format, especially for the Meher Baba's Word & His Three Bridges seminar.

“Our need to connect and support each other emerged time and again. If our focus remains on Avatar Meher Baba with the heart of forgiveness, I believe we'll grow more, deepen more, and connect more together.” – D.A.

This forgiveness work was the last work Don asked me to do before he passed away. He particularly asked me to return to a Baba group that was having trouble between the Board of Directors and some of the members, and so I did go there, and it was an amazing seminar. This seminar in Moraga afforded us plenty of time to explore issues around forgiveness in light of Meher Baba's wisdom. I shared firstly some ground rules to help us all feel safe in our sharing together, and I had learned some of the rules from Baba and Don, and some are just common sense. I also asked some questions, a sort of seeding of the seminar, about what I have come to call the Forgiveness Directions: what does it mean to forgive, how do we forgive another, how do we ask forgiveness, how do we forgive ourselves, what about forgiving Baba (or God) or asking Baba for forgiveness, etc. These questions were not intended to be answered in real time, but to be allowed to sprout. I was amazed at how quickly this seminar got rolling.

After a few stories from Soleil and myself, the group jumped right in. Before long we were moving through very tender material coming from all sorts of people in the circle of Baba's lovers. In some groups there are one or two who like to share verbally and most are more quiet, but here in Moraga there was so much sharing that day one just flew by.



At the end of Saturday afternoon, we made it a point to set aside time to do “forgiveness work.” We spent 20 minutes going over some prayers that we can use to tune into the forgiveness flow internally, and also discussed connecting with Baba, in silence, directly. Then we did go into silence – for about 20 minutes – and when we came out, those who felt moved to share explained what they had done.

Meher Baba's presence was palpable to me, as He moved through our hearts within our circle of love.

“For me it was not so much about forgiveness as it was about hearing others and being heard. Not so [much] about forgiveness as Love. We began the meeting by a reminder and demonstration that Baba's sign for Love and Forgiveness are the same. Baba would draw his hands, semi clenched as if holding something up from his stomach and at chest high open his hands push and release what he was holding.” You are forgiven, I love you” I need more of it and think we all would like and need more Love and Forgiveness.” --H.J.

A few people did not return. Day two started with an inspiration I felt Baba gave to start with checking-in about, "What was your nick-name as a child?" This ice-breaker was much more intimate than I could have imagined. I started with a nick-name Soleil gave me: SoulCandy, and there was laughter.

After this was -- so much sharing -- occurring that we felt the need to discuss a way forward. There was some discussion about what the group wanted (or needed) from day two, and I facilitated this discussion willing to surrender whatever we had planned to the immediate needs of the Baba community here. Ultimately, we broke into smaller groups working in parallel and did not spend time in silence on Sunday afternoon.

I think breaking into smaller parallel circles to work through issues was the right decision, as twenty people is a large group and it becomes difficult to sustain intimate sharing. Alisa Dreyfuss stepped up (on the spot) to lead one of the groups. Dick Anthony lead another, and Soleil and I led the third.

After we resumed as one large group, everyone had an opportunity to share what transpired in their smaller group, and I enjoyed these transitions. After this, Soleil lead the group in a sharing of what each individual feels they need from their involvement in the Baba community. This was a powerful way to close the circle. I also did forgiveness work that weekend, and I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to facilitate and participate. Thank you Baba, may you and Don be pleased.

Amen and amen.



Billy Baum, Ron Greenstein, and Soleil Brigham

# Chicago Sahavas

## Sept. 20-22-2013

Jai Baba Dear Friends in Meher Baba,

We are very happy to announce our upcoming AMBCC Third Annual Sahavas, on September 20-22, at the Avatar Meher Baba Center of Chicago. Our special guests this year will be Ward Parks and Caris Arkin! Ward will enlighten, entice and educate us on the varied and interesting topics of *Infinite Intelligence*, *God Speaks* and Baba's words and early messages. Caris is a wonderful musician, who sings with great passion and warmth to the Beloved.... Please see their brief biographical information below and save the dates for this very special event. The Sahavas registration materials and details will be emailed soon.

In His Love,  
Fereshteh Azad for AMBCC

### Sahavas Guests Bios:

Ward Parks was caught in the Avatar's net in November 1970 when he was a freshman in Harvard University. He completed his first pilgrimage to Baba's home in India in 1972 and has lived there full-time since 1993, serving as a spiritual trainee at the Avatar Meher Baba Trust. A professor of medieval literature when in the States (with specializations in Beowulf and Homer), Ward has worked primarily in the Trust's publication program and was one of the editors for *In God's Hand*, *Infinite Intelligence*, the revised sixth edition of *Baba's Discourses*, *Early Messages to the West*, and the republication of *Divine Theme*. He also edits the Trust newsletter, *In His Service*. Over the last four decades Ward has written perhaps four hundred songs and about half that number of ghazals. Apart from his work life, Ward's main interest is in associating with friends from Baba's family all over the world.

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Although primarily recognized as a singer/guitar-player and songwriter, Caris Arkin is actually a multi-instrumentalist, drummer, and computer music production specialist and a self-proclaimed horse whisperer. Caris has, in his own words, "deeply moved a handful of people" and, in all seriousness his music and performances have indeed touched and excited many within the Meher Baba Community...whether in India, or at Myrtle Beach, or other Baba gatherings.

Plans are forecast to have at least one brand new recording from Caris (dedicated to Meher Baba followers) and including "The Band of the New Communicators" and "Exactly What You Say You Are!" in time for this year's Sahavas.

Further info can be found at:

[www.infinito.it/utenti/divinghorse](http://www.infinito.it/utenti/divinghorse)  
or at [www.imradio.com/caris-arkin](http://www.imradio.com/caris-arkin)